

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. SAM GRAVES

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 27, 2009

Mr. GRAVES. Madam Speaker, due to personal reasons, on Monday, January 26, 2009 I missed rollcall votes 30 and 31. Had I been present, I would have voted "aye" on those rollcall votes.

Thank you.

HARDROCK MINING AND
RECLAMATION ACT OF 2009**HON. NICK J. RAHALL II**

OF WEST VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 27, 2009

Mr. RAHALL. Madam Speaker, last Friday, January 23, marks the passing of 137 years predecessors in the U.S. House of Representatives began to debate a bill to promote the development of mineral resources in the United States. One described the legislation as "an experiment."

On that day in January 1872, Representative Sargent from the State of California noted prior fierce debate in the House over a core element of the proposed mining law—that the Federal Government would be selling off the mineral rights of the United States rather than holding onto Federal ownership and imposing a royalty on future production. Representative Maynard from the State of Tennessee questioned whether the law might encourage speculation.

During an April 1872 debate in the U.S. Senate, Senator Cole from the State of California cautioned that the proposed mining law would allow a person to acquire large tracts of land "which might be worth thousands of dollars per acre, perhaps millions . . ." Senator Alcorn from the State of Mississippi acknowledged that he had never seen a gold mine in his life, while Senator Casserly, also from the State of California, warned of men who could not imagine the mineral deposits that "lie to a fabulous extent in value between the Mississippi River and the Sierra Nevada."

Ultimately, however, our predecessors believed the bill would "meet with universal favor" and would prevent litigation among mining claimants. They liked the idea that the bill might, as Representative Sargent hoped, "bring large amounts of money into the Treasury of the United States, causing the miners to settle themselves permanently, and improve and establish homes, to go deeper in the earth, to dig further into the Hills . . . and build up their communities and States."

And so, on May 10, 1872, Congress passed a law that encouraged people to go West, locate hardrock minerals and stake mining claims on Federal lands, and remove treasure troves of gold, silver, copper, and platinum from the public domain—for free.

The General Mining Law of 1872, or the "experiment," as some of our predecessors named it, has endured for more than one and a third centuries—a total of 137 years.

Today, we can resoundingly assert that the experiment has lasted long enough.

Consider some of the impacts of the 1872 Mining Law:

According to the Congressional Budget Office, it allows the hardrock mining industry to remove \$1 billion in precious metals every year from America's public lands, with no royalty payment or production fee to the Federal Government. By comparison, the coal, gas, and oil industries pay royalties of 8 percent to 18.75 percent.

According to the Department of the Interior, it has allowed mining claimants to buy American public's lands for \$2.50–\$5 an acre—lands that could easily be worth thousands or tens of thousands of dollars an acre today. Between 1994 and 2006, the U.S. government was forced to sell off more than 27,000 acres of public land holding valuable minerals for a pittance: \$112,000.

Finally, as detailed in several Government Accountability Office reports, there have been instances where American taxpayers have paid a fortune to buy back the very lands we once gave away. From Central Idaho's Thunder Mountain, to Telluride, CO, to land outside Yellowstone National Park, millions of public and private dollars have been spent to reacquire thousands of acres of mining claims to protect public access for hunting, fishing, and other recreational opportunities.

Given our current economic crisis and the empty state of our national Treasury, it is ludicrous to be allowing this outmoded law to continue to exempt these lucrative mining activities from paying a fair return to the American people.

Beyond that, the 1872 Mining Law has allowed unscrupulous owners of hardrock mines to abandon hundreds of thousands of mines—and to require American taxpayers to foot the bill because there is no "polluter-pays" funding source, that is, a dedicated source of cleanup funding.

In 2007, the U.S. Forest Service estimated that, with its current annual abandoned mine cleanup budget of \$15 million, it would take 370 years to complete its \$5.5 billion in abandoned mine cleanup and safety mitigation work. In 2008, the inspector general of the Department of the Interior concluded that the public's health and safety is jeopardized by the unaddressed hazards posed by abandoned mines on Federal lands, including lands in the national parks. These old mines are not just eyesores, they are killers.

Today, I, along with Representatives MILLER, WAXMAN, MARKEY, BERMAN, GRIJALVA, HOLT, COSTA, CHRISTENSEN, STARK, KILDEE, HINCHEY, ESHOO, BLUMENAUER, KENNEDY, KIND, CAPPS, SCHIFF, HONDA, SALAZAR, TSONGAS, and CONNOLLY, introduce the Hardrock Mining and Reclamation Act of 2009. This legislation would end the financial and environmental abuses permitted by the 1872 Mining Law—archaic provisions that fly in the face of logic, and are not what taxpayers, sportsmen, conservationists, and western communities want or need.

This is the same bill that the House of Representatives passed by a bipartisan vote of 244–166 in 2007. It contains the same critical requirements, including:

An 8 percent royalty on production from future hardrock mines on public lands, and a 4 percent royalty from current mines.

A permanent end to the sell-off of public lands holding mineral resources.

The establishment of a clean-up fund for abandoned hardrock mine sites, prioritizing the riskiest ones.

Stronger review requirements, specifically for mines proposed near national parks, to help protect nationally significant areas such as Grand Canyon National Park, where miners had filed more than 1,100 claims within five miles of the park as of October 2008.

A threshold environmental standard for mining. This standard would not preclude mining, but it would make it possible to protect public lands if a mining proposal would irrevocably destroy other equally valuable resources.

Every year, the mining industry's fear of losing the sweet deal they currently enjoy on U.S. public lands leads, predictably, to baseless arguments that reform will cause a large scale departure of mining from American soil.

But we know there are many reasons companies will still want to mine for hardrock minerals in the United States. In an annual survey of metal mining and exploration companies published by the independent, Canadian-based Fraser Institute in 2008, Nevada ranked second out of 68 jurisdictions worldwide for overall policy attractiveness. Utah and Wyoming also made the top 10, and Arizona the top 20. The survey highlighted why the U.S. has appeal. Relative to many other countries the U.S. offers good enforcement, good infrastructure, a stable political system, minimal risk of terrorism or guerrilla groups ruining a mining investment—and a predictable regulatory system. Imposition of a Federal royalty—or fee—on production—will not change those powerful advantages.

We also know that the mining industry is clinging to an outdated boondoggle. Nearly every country in the world imposes a royalty—except the United States.

Industry might also trot out the argument that this bill undermines our Nation's secure access to the minerals we use in everyday products. Yet, import reliance alone is not a problem, as the National Research Council of the National Academies asserted in a recent study of critical minerals. Some minerals we have always imported in significant quantities, simply because the ones we need do not exist in mineable quantities here.

Furthermore, a 2008 Congressional Research Service report concluded that Mining Law reform legislation would not likely have much impact on domestic mining capacity or the import reliance of minerals like copper, uranium, platinum, and molybdenum, in large part because the vast majority of mining on federal lands is for gold—about 88 percent.

Today, our goals for mining policy are no longer what they were in 1872, when Representative Sargent hoped the mining law would encourage miners to "dig deeper into the earth" and "further into the Hills." We can aspire to a law that does not merely promote mining, but one that also protects the other values of the hills themselves: clean water, wildlife, recreation, open space, and tourism. We should aim for a law that encourages mining but also encourages responsible corporate citizenship. And, a law that brings a fair return to the taxpayer. That would be a Mining Law worthy of the 21st—rather than the 19th—century.

REWARDING YOUTH MENTORSHIP
IN THE NEW YEAR

HON. CHARLES B. RANGEL

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 27, 2009

Mr. RANGEL. Madam Speaker, I rise today to commend anyone who dedicates his or her time to mentoring this country's impressionable youth—in any capacity, in all capacities. There is no greater gift than the selfless giving of one's time and energies to the emotional, scholastic, and moral development of another. We can all trace back in our histories that one person or group of people who set us on the straight and narrow, from whom we drew inspiration, motivation, and a sense of purpose.

For far too long, wayward youth have had few role models to emulate, few adults to guide them in an otherwise confusing, self-deprecating, and turbulent moment in their lives. For far too long, the corrosive influence of drugs, domestic abuse, academic failure, and delinquency have instilled in our youth a hopelessness that permeates far into their adolescence and even adulthood. These honorable many, who have taken the charge of leading these youngsters to the road of successes, deserve our praise and our respect, and I am thrilled to support naming this month of January "National Mentoring Month" in an attempt to do just that.

Three million youngsters are currently benefitting from a mentoring relationship, but that just isn't enough. Five times as many kids are in urgent need of guidance, and it is up to us to demonstrably reward mentors for their vows of time, commitment, and effort. A mentorship is not a task taken up lightly or without the resolve to work diligently, generously, and openly—but it provides its participants such innumerable, intrinsic rewards that it becomes a challenge, and pleasure, certainly worthy of fulfilling.

May mentors across this great Nation feel proud of the work they are doing, and may others take note of their tremendous example and develop a mentoring relationship of their own.

THE ST. PETERSBURG TIMES
CELEBRATES 125 YEARS OF PUBLISHING EXCELLENCE

HON. C. W. BILL YOUNG

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 27, 2009

Mr. YOUNG of Florida. Madam Speaker, The St. Petersburg Times, my hometown newspaper, began its 125th year of publishing this month.

Starting from humble beginnings in the back of a Dunedin, Florida drugstore, 3 people—a doctor, dentist and printer—turned out 480 copies of the newspaper's first edition. Today, The Times is Florida's most read newspaper.

Following my remarks, I will include for the benefit of my colleagues, a column by Paul Tash, the Editor, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of The St. Petersburg Times, commemorating the newspaper's growth and plans to celebrate its history over the next year.

Madam Speaker, The St. Petersburg Times has dutifully recorded the history of our com-

munity these past 125 years, and as Paul Tash writes, "sharing in the success, suffering in the setbacks." Please join me in thanking all those past and present employees of The Times who have brought the news to our doorstep, in good times and bad, and even during the most trying of times.

[From the St. Petersburg Times, Jan. 14, 2009]

OUR COMMON HISTORY: TAMPA BAY AND ITS
TIMES

(By Paul Tash, Editor, Chairman, CEO)

This year the St. Petersburg Times turns 125 years old. To mark the occasion, we are starting a weekly feature of local history, drawn from the newspaper's own pages. In their origins, neither the newspaper nor its community amounted to much.

The Times started out as a weekly in July of 1884. In the back room of a drugstore in Dunedin, three men—a doctor, a dentist and a printer—teamed up to produce the first edition. The total circulation was 480 copies. As my colleague Rob Hooker once wrote, "Their paper was like the community—small, humble and faced with an uncertain future."

Over the years, however, the frontier villages scattered around Tampa Bay grew together into a vibrant, dynamic metropolitan region, and the Times grew with it.

Today it is Florida's favorite newspaper, with the largest circulation in the state. Nelson Poynter, a generous and far-sighted owner, protected its independence, and three decades after he died, the Times remains rooted in this community, not part of a chain or conglomerate.

There have been rough patches along the way. Back in the 1930s—the last time a real estate boom collapsed into depression—St. Petersburg city government defaulted on millions of dollars in bond payments, and the public schools started charging tuition. On the outskirts of town, a sign went up warning visitors, "Do Not Come Here Seeking Work."

Those hard times also hit the Times. Advertising dropped by two-thirds. Since they had no cash, merchants paid their bills with vouchers, which the newspaper parceled out to employees as pay. At one point, the news staff dropped to 15 people, and the paper itself dwindled to eight pages.

But over the long term, the trend lines have kept climbing. Compare just two scenes.

During the World Series in 1924, a crowd gathered outside the Times' offices while an editor with a megaphone called out the play-by-play, coming by telegraph into the newsroom. Eighty-four years later and just a few blocks away, 40,000 fans gathered to watch the town's own team playing in the World Series.

For a century and a quarter, the St. Petersburg Times has recorded the unfolding story of our region, sharing in its success, suffering in the setbacks. Now we celebrate our common history by offering these slices of it. And even in this difficult stretch, we are betting that Tampa Bay's best days lie ahead. That is one of history's lessons.

IN HONOR OF GERTRUDE PINTZ

HON. DENNIS J. KUCINICH

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 27, 2009

Mr. KUCINICH. Madam Speaker, I rise today in honor of Mrs. Gertrude Pintz, upon the recent celebration of her 100th birthday.

Gertrude Pintz was born on December 29th, 1908 in Austria-Hungary. She has been blessed over her lifetime with strength, joy, her family and friends. She is known for seeing only the good in others and beauty in life. Mrs. Pintz lives every day with a grateful heart, warm smile and positive outlook.

Mrs. Pintz married the love of her life, Sebastian, and together they raised 3 sons—Sebastian, Adam and the late Henry. She remains close with her sons, 7 grandchildren and 10 great-grandchildren. As the matriarch of her family, Mrs. Pintz hosted the family's annual Thanksgiving dinner at her Cleveland home, continuing this tradition until the age of 88. In her early seventies, following the passing of her beloved husband, Mrs. Pintz embarked on pursuing her artistic talents. She enrolled in a four year art school, where she studied oil painting. To this day, her artwork adorns the homes of numerous family members and friends.

Madam Speaker and colleagues, please join me in honor of Mrs. Gertrude Pintz upon the joyous occasion of her 100th birthday. Her love of family, love of life and youthful soul all serve as an inspirational example for all of us to follow. I wish Mrs. Pintz an abundance of peace, health and happiness today, and throughout the years to come.

JIM RICE'S ELECTION TO THE
BASEBALL HALL OF FAME

HON. NIKI TSONGAS

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 27, 2009

Ms. TSONGAS. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor Jim Rice of Andover, MA for his election into the Baseball Hall of Fame.

Regarded as one of the most dominant hitters to have played the game, Rice was a 1978 American League Most Valuable Player and an eight-time All Star. With a .298 career batting average, Rice hit 382 home runs and 1,451 RBIs during his 16 years in Major League Baseball. Having spent his entire career in Boston, Rice becomes the fourth Hall of Fame player to have spent his entire career with the Red Sox.

Rice has also been an active member of his community, contributing his time and effort to several charitable organizations in Massachusetts. In 1979 he was named an honorary chairman of the Jimmy Fund, which supports cancer research and care at the Dana-Farber Institute in Boston. He was also recognized by the Jimmy Fund in 1992 with the Jimmy Award, which honors individuals who have shown "exceptional devotion" to cancer research. Some of his other charitable activities include working with the Neurofibromatosis Foundation of New England and raising money for toy drives for local homeless children.

Since retiring in 1989, Rice has continued his commitment to the Red Sox, working as a hitting coach and instructor. Rice also serves as a popular studio analyst on the Red Sox pre- and post-game shows for NESN.

Rice and his wife, Corine, have lived in Andover since 1975 with their two children, Carissa and Chancey.

I congratulate him for his election to the Baseball Hall of Fame and for his notable achievements throughout his career.